

## Dispersants

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Objective:	To reduce impact to sensitive shoreline habitats and animals that use the water surface by chemically dispersing oil into the water column.
Description:	Dispersants reduce the oil/water interfacial tension, thereby decreasing the energy needed for the slick to break into small particles and mix into the water column. Specially formulated products containing surface-active agents are sprayed (at concentrations of 1-5 percent by volume of the oil) from aircraft or boats onto the slicks. Some agitation is needed to achieve dispersion.
Applicable Habitat Types:	Water bodies with sufficient depth and volume for mixing and dilution.
When to Use:	When the impact of the floating oil has been determined to be greater than the impact of dispersed oil on the water-column community.
Biological Constraints:	Use in shallow water could affect benthic resources. Consideration should be made to avoid directly spraying any wildlife, especially birds or fur-bearing marine mammals.
Environmental Effects:	Until sufficiently diluted, the dispersed oil can adversely impact organisms in the upper 30 feet (10 meters) of the water column. Because dispersion may be only partially effective, some water-surface and shoreline impacts could occur.
Waste Generation:	None.